THE

VVitch of the VVood-lands:

OR, THE

Coblers New Tranſlation.

Written by *L. P.*

Here *Robin* the Cobler for his former evils,
Was puniſht worſe then *Fauſtus* with his devils.

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THE Witch of the Woodlands: OR, The Coblers new Tranſlation.

CHAP. I.

IN the Wild of Kent, not far from Rumny Marſh, there dwelt a merry conceited Cobler, commonly called Robin the Devil, which afterwards came to be called, The Witch of the Woodlands. This Cobler always had a ſpecial care to pleaſe his Cuſtomers, but chiefly he would be ſure, that if any pretty wench brought him a job to do, he would go through-ſtitch with her work firſt of all; He would jeſt and be merry in company, he would ſing in his Shop like a Nightingal; he could cut a caper with Jack Pudding, and was not much inferiour to luſty Lawrence, which got eighteen wenches with child all in one year, for it was well known, that he got three wenches with child all in one night; but as the Proverb goes, The Pitcher that goes often to the water, may at laſt come broken home: And the ſweeteſt meat requires the ſowreſt ſawce: So it fared with Robin the Cobler, for one of his wenches

being suddenly brought to bed with a Male Child, the Mother of the Damsel served Robin the Cobler with a warrant, and made him to marry her daughter out of hand, then was the poor Cobler fallen into a peck of troubles, and knew not how to behave himself; For though he had been factor of Mars, yet he never was made a Vulcan before that time. And now must he provide for clouts & whittels, fire and candle, sope and starch, white bread and milk, a nurse and cradle, with many other matters which belong to married men to look after: But as it is in the old Proverb, That one ill chance follows another, so it was with him, for the other two Damsels which he had formerly made use of, now began to make use of him, & brought him two children more to keep, which was done both in one day; which when Robin the Cobler did behold, he fell into such a fearful quandary; for that the people that beheld him, said, that he looked so pitiful upon the matter, that they thought in their minds that he would never be good again.

Then began Robin with doleful words, with weeping eyes and with wringing hands, to bewail his former follies, saying, O silly rogue that I am, was it not enough for me to sing, dance, drink Ale, break cakes, talk and be merry amongst Maids, but that I must like a Town-

Bull

Bull, over-run all that ſtand in my way; and ſo in the end be pounded for my breaking looſe; now am I in a worſe caſe then Porrage John, Marriot the Lawyer, or the Cow-keeper of the Pinder of Wakefield? I would that my Father had never begot me, then ſhould I never have begotten ſo many wenches with

Here *Robin* for his former Letchery
Doth ſuffer in his members grievouſly.

Child; or elſe I would that ſome honeſt Sow-gelder had done his office upon me, to

keep me honeſt, then had I ſcap'd the miſery now I am ſure to endure: Now whilſt Robin the Cobler was making this ſorrowful lamentation, a friend of his whiſpered him in the ear, and gave him counſel to be gone from them all, ſaying, That one pair of heels is worth two pair of hands: whoſe counſel Robin took, as you ſhall hear in the following Chapter.

CHAP. II.

RObin the Cobler having hearkned to his friends advice, made no more to do of the matter, but truſt up his Tools to be gone, reſolving to come for London, and there to work Journey-work till ſuch time that his children were come to be men, and able to work for themſelves: but as he paſſed along the Country, which is called the Wild of Kent, he loſt his way in the Woodlands: when night was almoſt come upon him, and finding no path to guide him, he wandreth up & down till it was almoſt ten of the clock, in a pitifull cold froſty dark Winters night: but at the laſt he heard a Cock crow, whereby he underſtood that there was ſome dwelling houſe near at hand, and ſo being ſomewhat comforted to hear the crowing of the Cock, he made his approach

proach to the house, and knocking at door, there came forth an old Woman with a dish-clout bound about her head and a staff in her hand, and demanded of Robin to know what he knockt for? O Mother, (quoth he) I am a poor distressed Traveller out which hath lost my way, and willing would I be to give sir pence for a Bed this night to lay my weary bones on: Marry, (quoth she) all the beds that I have are not worth sir pence, for I have no more than what I lye on my self, but if thou wilt take pains to do as I do, thou and I will lye together for once, where we will hug one another as the Devil hug'd the Witch: Robin beholding, and taking notice of her person all the body over, saw that she was long nos'd, bleary'd, crooked-neckt, wry-mouth'd, crumpshoulder'd, beetle-browed, thin-bellied, bowlegg'd, and splay-footed: He began to frame an excuse, saying, Good Mother, I pray you to consider this, that I am a Batchelor, and never came in bed to any woman since I was born of my Mother: Will thou swear that, that which thou speaketh is true? I will, (quoth Robin) whereupon he heard a hollow voice, as if it came out of the top of a Chimney, crying three several times, Robin the Cobler is mine, Robin the Cobler is mine, Robin the Cobler is mine; These words when

he heard: he thought that some the devil was come to fetch him away alive, and presently he fell into such a trembling condition, that his hands shook, his pulses beat, his heart panted, his head ached, his nose dropt, his belly rumbled, & a certain parcel of melting tears dropt out of the lower end of his breeches, and so falling down upon his knees to the old woman, desired her to let him have a longing, how she would, or where she would; then the old Woman took him in, and with a remnant of water which she had kept a long time in a Chamber-pot for that purpose, she washt him from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, & made him as white as if she had washt him in puppy-dog-water, and so they went lovingly to bed together; what followed after shall be related in the ensuing discourse.

CHAP. 3.

After that Robin the Cobler had taken his first sleep, he awaked, and turning himself on the other side, he felt for his Bed-fellow but she was not there: and having gotten all the Bed-room to himself, he began to wonder to himself about the passages which had happened to him the night before, and therewithal he bethought himself how he might use

a meanes to get away before the old Witch his new-made Landlady came back again to him, for he supposed that she had gone forth to fetch company to cut his throat; but whilst he was thus thinking in came the Old Woman with three more of her Disciples, with every one of them a light Torch in her hand, crying out all at once, that they would be revenged on Robin the Cobler for all his whore-hunting tricks: These four female Witches could transform themselves into any humane shape at their own pleasure: so the that Robin took to be his Mother in law, brought in an ugly Bear at her heels; another brought in a ravening Wolf, and the third brought a sharp, long, broad bladed knife; poor Robin although the weather was cold, and the Bed-cloaths very thin, yet he was hot enough: For, being in a stinking fear, he covered himself over head and ears, all save one hole that was in the Coverlid, which he now and then closely pept out at, but durst not to stir for his life: but now begins the game: The grand Witch of the company, otherwise called the Landlady of the house, put her hand under the bed, and pulled out a Taber and a Pipe, and plaid such a fit, that it lasted till it was within 2 hours of day; all this while the other three Witches danced the Irish Hay with their heels upwards,

wards, mean time poor Robin the Cobler lay a bed and bepist himself, till at last two quarts run through the bed upon the ground; whether it were done for joy, or for fear, Ile leave that to other such as himself to consider of; but when the Musick was ended, the Bear began to roar, and the Woolf began to howl for food: then said the old Witch, I have in the house the bravest breakfast for your two Familiars, that they have feasted on ever since they devoured the two damnable whores which were bewitcht as they rode in a Coach towards a Bawdy-house in London: and now since that Witches have power of none but Swearers & Cursers, Thieves and Dissemblers, Pimps Bawds & Panders, Whores and Whore-hunters, and such like manner of people, let us make the best use of our time that we may: And now you shall see what a gallant prize I have lighted upon by chance: There was a merry disposed Cobler, which dwelling not far from the Town of Rumny, who was every day used to drink, swagger, swear and domineer, and oftentimes he would say that he car'd not a turd for all the Witches in the world, and that he had a trick to defend himself from the power of Witches: which was by washing his hands, and saying his Prayers every morning before he went forth

of

of the dayes : but although he served God in the morning he served the Devil e're night : for there was hardly one day in the week, but he would go a Whoring, and oftentimes he would intice honest wenches to sin by his dissembling speeches, and his false forswearing himself, making them believe, that if he got them with child, he would marry with them, amongst the rest, he got three Widdows daughters with child, all in one night, making every one of them believe, and swearing that he would marry with them the morrow after, which he never did intend, but at last Goodwife Web the Widdow, forc'd him to Marry her daughter: which being done, the other two Wenches which he had gotten with child, being delivered, brought him their two children to keep, and as he got them all three with child in one night, so they brought him 3 children to keep in one day : these things he thought that Witches had not known : but my Imps spend not their time in vain, for I every night send forth my familiar imps, Madge of Wakefield, in the likeness of a black Cat, which told me of every thing that Robin the Cobler did do : but the archest piece of Roguery that ever he did in all his life, was done to a Widdow Woman in the Isle of Thanet, for he promis'd her marriage, and made her sell her

Widdows

Widdows Estate for four and twenty pound, and told her that if she would lend him the money, to buy him Leather, that he would be married to her on Thursday next, and wisht that if he did not do according to his promise, that he might be torn in pieces with Wolves and Bears, but he never came back to the Widdow again; and last of all, he run away from his Wife and three Children, and now he lies under that Coverlid: When the other three Witches had heard this discovery, they all leapt for joy, and the three familiar spirits which went in the shape of a Woolf, a Bear, and a black Cat, were ready to tear the witches to pieces for victuals, they were so hungry; then said one of them to the rest, seeing he wisht he might be devoured by Wolves and Bears, he shall have his wish, and he shall presently be cut in quarters, and the Woolf shall have his Heart, Liver, and Lungs for his breakfast, the Bear shall have his Paunch and Bowels, and the Cat shall have his privy Members to gnaw upon: Nay, quoth the old Witch, it shall not be so, for he shall not have so pleasant a death as you speak of, but we will have a little more sport with him before he dies; That very word procured some comfort to Robins languishing Spirits; for he had rather chuse to lead a sorrowful life,

then

than to dye a sudden death : And now to be brief in the matter, they pul'd ẏ Bed-cloaths from off him, and made him stand up stark naked as ever he was born before them ; the Woolf bit him by the Throat, the Bear bit him by the bum; and ẏ Cat bit him by ẏ Members, and every one drew blood of him, but did him no grert harm at that time : Now (said the old Witch) we have markt you for

Here *Robin* the Cobler like a Fox doth run,
Before the Dogs whose rage he cannot shun.

our own, and therewithal she past sentence upon him, that he should have three days punishment for his former offences, and afterwards he

he was to be eaten up alive; the first of the three days he was to be transformed into the shape of a Fox, and to be chased with Dogs from morning till night.

The second day he was to be a riding Nag, and to carry the Witch whether she pleased.

The third day he was to be an Owl, and so fly from one place to another all the day long, so having agreed upon the matter, as soon as the day appeared, Robin the Cobler was to be a Fox, and so out of the doors they set him running, and having transform'd themselves into the shape of Dogs, followed close at his heels, & every time they overtook him they bit him by the buttocks, and nipt him devilishly, for they had no mercy in their teeth.

The next day they transform'd him into ye shape of a Horse, and so the Witches got upon his back, three of them at a time, and rid him over Hills and Mountains, through Rivers & Ponds, through all sorts of waters thick and thin; and worst of all, they rid him through so many bushes brambles & briars, till they tore the very skin from the flesh of him, so that the Whore-masters blood of his run from him in many places, and yet were not his sorrows at an end, nor no man knows when they will be.

The third day they made an Owl of him, who flying up and down from Tree to Tree at

noon

noon time of the day crying whu, whu, whu, the birds came thick & three fold about him, wondring most strangely to see an Owl abroad by daylight: wherefore to fulfil the old Proverb, they all fell upon him like Pies upon an Owl, And to be brief, they pluckt his feathers, broke

Here *Robin* by the vertue of a Swan,
Hath broke the witches charms, & is a man.

his wings, and pickt out one of his eyes: This being done, the grand Witch consulting with the rest of the Witches, saying that Robin the Cobler had done enough of any conscience for his

his wenching tricks, and so they turn'd him into the shape of a Swan.

And last of all they withdrew their Inchanting spels, and so Robin the pitiful Cobler became a man again; but before he departed, they made him kneel down, and kisse every one of their fleshy parts, and therewithal they parted houshold.

CHAP. 4.

How *Robin* the Cobler having got loose from the Witches, became a new man; and of many notable exploits which he did, you shall presently hear.

NOw when Robin the Cobler had broken the spels of Witchcraft, his eye sight, his hearing, his speech, his senses, and his knowledge, was all restored unto him again, but yet he looked of a pitiful complexion, just as a man may say, like one of Pharoh's lean kine; his visage was pale and gastly, his eyes seemed as if they were sunk into his head, his nose was like the nose of a scolding Ale-wife, long and sharp, and his tongue did gaggle, as if it had been made of the Devils bollock-leather, his belly and his back was so clung together, that he was scarce able to shit for bones.

Nor had he any kind of habit to put on that was

was worth the throwing to the dogs; only an old lowse Smock, and a pair of slipshoes; which one of the Witches had given him out of meer pitiful charity; but yet he shewed himself to be in a far more happier taking than he was before, when he was ridden with three she-devils at one time.

Then began Robin to ruminate, and to think what course he had best to take, and which way was best for him to steer his course: and at last he resolved to take his fortune once more to the famous City of London, and to try if fortune would favour him any better luck than he had before, but he vowed that he would keep along the Road, and never go through the Woodlands any more, for fear, lest the Witches should meet with him again. Now as he passed along on the way, the Boys and the Children would run away from him, thinking that he had been Mad, insomuch that there was not one able Boy or Girl to be seen in the streets; but here comes on the very bitterest of all, poor Robin the Tobler having gone along on his journey for the space of almost two woful days and nights, without meat, or drink, or money to buy, he began to bewail his sorrowful life in this mournful manner. Oh pitiful Cobler that I am, for now I am in worse case than ever I was before. When I was a Horse,

the Witches did ride me, and put me to much pain, but yet they gave me somewhat to feed upon at night, though it were but Bran and Water, which I can prove to be pretty good fair for Horses, when they are very hungry, so they may have enough to fill their bellies withal.

When I was a Fox, the Witches in the shapes of dogs ran after me, and hurried me up and down, and at every stop and turn bit me by the buttocks: but now I am hunger bitten, which is ten thousand times worse. When I was an Owl, I was most shamefully abused, and wondred at by other Birds; but now I am made a wondring-stock to all the folks that sees me, insomuch that no Man, Woman, or Child, will not dare to come neer me, long of the poverty of my flesh, and disguise of habit. Oh what a pitiful wretched case am I in now! an Ape, an Owl, a Fox, a Goose, a Horse, an Ox, or an Ass, is in a far better taking then I am in. O that I could with *Diogines* Mare, feed upon Thistles, or like a Camelian live by the Air. Now whilst he was thus complaining, by chance came along a blind begger-man, which had a whole Wallet full of fragments of Fish, and Meat, and mammocks of Bread and Cheese, which he had gotten among his good benefactors. When Robin the Cobler had first his

eye

eye upon the blind mans Wallet of victuals, the very heart in his belly leapt for joy, hoping then he should fill his Belly once again; and thereupon taking courage upon him, he made his address, and spake to the blind Begger-man by the way of Complement, knowing that the blind man could not see what manner of person he was, and so taking hold of him by the shoulder, began to express his mind in this manner: Well overtaken Father, how far Walk you this Way? Marry, quoth the Beggar, but to the next Village, and for want of a guide to lead me, I am in fear I shall come too late to my lodging; Why, quoth the Cobler? rather then you shall do amiss, I will take the pains to lead you my self, for I love old men with all my heart.

CHAP. V.

Here followeth a Discourse of the happy Fortune that hapned to *Robin* the Cobler after all his miseries.

As Robin the Cobler was leading the Blind Beggar along on the way, the Blind man found him to be exceeding diligent, and therewithal desired of Robin to know who he was, that would undervalue himself to take pains to lead him; Then, qd.

Robin, I am a Gentleman born and bred, and so you would say if you could but see me; but as it comes to pass I have neyer a penny to help my self, for I have been a Valiant Cavalier for the King, but by fortune of Warre I am utterly undone for ever, unless some speedy help come by heavenly providence. I tell you father, my Land, not long since, was sequestred, my goods and my money taken from me, and my body carried to Prison, where I have lain three years, three months, three weeks, and three days, and at the last by

happy chance I got out of prison; but now I am out, I know not how to live, nor how to get one bit of bread to relieve my hungry stomach, for I have been fasting two days and nights, and never a bit of victuals came within my body: Alas for you, good Sir, said the Beggar, I much lament your case, but if you will be pleased to accept of such poor fare as I have in my Wallet, you shall be heartily welcome to it, and the next Ale-house that we come to, I will give you liquor of the best to swallow it down: whereupon the Wallet was laid down, and the victuals sorted out upon the green bank. I think there was no need to bid Robin to eat. But when he had filled his belly, away they went together chearfully to the place appointed, where they lay lovingly together that night, and the next day the Begger brought him home to his own house, where was plenty of good Cloaths both of Woollen and Linnen, with which the Begger suited Robin, and also directed him to a Coffer where was two hundred and fifty pounds of ready money; All this (quoth the Begger) shall be your own when I dye, if you will stay with me all your life time.

Whereupon the Cobler replyed, with a very good will Sir; which bargain being made, Robin and his old Master would every

day

day walk about to good mens houses; to see what victuals they could get, till at the last Robin became as cunning at the Trade as his Master, and was acquainted with most of the Master-beggers that lived in the County of Kent.

But to conclude, in process of time, the blind Begger died, and then all his wealth fell to Robin, who afterwards went home to his former habitation, and took order for the breeding of his three Children, that he got in one night, and gave the two Wenches ten pounds a piece for the injury that he had formerly done them, and threw the rest of the money into his wives lap. And so endeth the story of Robin the Cobler.

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